

# What do Philosophers Talk About?

"Philosophy" comes from the Greek word *philosophía*, meaning 'love of wisdom'.

In a similar manner, studying philosophy involves asking questions, debating proposed answers, critically looking at problems & arguments, and having a desire to know more about various aspects of knowledge, reasoning, the nature of the world, and society.

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The following are just some of the many areas of study that are available at the University of Manitoba - Philosophy Department:

## Epistemology

The study of knowledge and reasoning. It asks questions like "what does knowledge amount to?", "how can we know the external world?", and "are there right and wrong ways to reason or are these just expressions of power?".

## Philosophy of Language

Examine language - such as: names, identity sentences, and more.

Consider this:

The evening star refers to the planet Venus when seen in the evening and the morning star refers to Venus when seen in the morning. So, both refer to Venus. Yet, it seems wrong to point to Venus in the morning and say "hey, there's the evening star".

## Metaphysics

Examine and question the nature of reality, particularly as it pertains to the mind & body, cause & effect, objects, and more.

## Applied Ethics

Explore ethical theories and their applications through a variety of topics, including:

the environment, sexual freedom, human equality, abortion, euthanasia, civil disobedience, biology & medicine (for example, genetic engineering), business, war, and many more.

## Moral Theory

Critically analyze moral judgements in given cases, such as those identified under "Applied Ethics".

Investigate the moral theories behind those judgements & discuss various important questions. For example, is there such a thing as a moral fact independent of our societies?

## History of Philosophy

The University of Manitoba has various courses that introduce students to important philosophers and their many theories - which are still discussed today.

## Political Philosophy

Have you ever wondered whether democracy is really the best political system? This is just one of many questions this area of philosophy asks.

Political philosophy looks to examine different political theories & systems, as well as how these theories / systems change and impact society.

## Philosophy and Sexuality

Examine legal and moral arguments regarding sexuality. Topics discussed include monogamy, prostitution & pornography, the nature of consent, the definition of marriage, and more!

## Logic

Learn how to translate arguments into modern symbolic logic & analyze those translations.

As well, learn how to determine the validity of an argument through logic.

If any of these areas sound interesting, consider taking a philosophy course. Or, if you don't want to take a course but want to learn more, follow the Philosophy Students' Association page (U of M Philosophy and Ethics Centre Student Associations) and come to a pub night hosted by the Association.